Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, ETRD, IR, IN

SUBJECT: KUDREMUKH IRON ORE PROJECT

REF: NEW DELHI 9693

1. REFTEL CORRECTLY REPORTS THAT FINAL AGREEMENT ON KUDREMUKH PROJECT WAS NOT REACHED DURING VISIT OF INDIAN DELEGATION LAST WEEK. HOWEVER, BOTH DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR LOANS KHALEGIRAD, ORGANIZATION FOR INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF IRAN, AND INDIAN EMBASSY COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR RANGNATHAN, HAVE INDICATED SIGNALS ARE STILL GO FOR KUDREMUKH. KHALEGIRAD SAID DRAFT AGREEMENT WAS INITIALED BUT I'S REMAIN TO BE DOTTED AND T'S TO BE CROSSED. RANGNATHAN SAID LOAN WILL TOTAL \$630 MILLION TO BE REPAID BY INDIAN IRON ORE SHIPMENTS OVER A 20-YEAR PERIOD. HE ADDED THAT ONLY TECHNICALITIES REMAIN TO BE WORKED OUT SUCH AS WHETHER LOAN WILL COVER CERTAIN SHIPPING AND DEVELOPMENT COSTS. HE ESTIMATED ANOTHER TWO MONTHS WILL LAPSE BEFORE A FINAL AGREEMENT IS SIGNED.

2. WE HAVE RECEIVED NO INDICATION THAT IRANIANS ARE PULLING BACK FROM THE KUDREMUKH PROJECT. PLANS FOR CREATING A MAJOR STEEL INDUSTRY IN IRAN HAVE NOT BEEN CHANGED, AND FAILING TO CONCLUDE THE KUDREMUKH AGREEMENT WOULD MEAN THE GOI WOULD HAVE TO START OVER AND FIND ANOTHER MAJOR SOURCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF IRON ORE. HOWEVER, RECENT PUBLIC ADMISSION BY GOI

OFFICIALS THAT MANY LARGE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WILL NOT BE COMPLETED WITHIN EARLIER VERY AMBITIOUS TIME SCHEDULE PROBABLY MEANS THAT CONCLUSION OF KUDREMUKH AGREEMENT IS NOW CONSIDERED SOMEWHAT LESS URGENT.

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